1	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT			
2	FOR THE E	CASTERN DISTRICT C 	F PENNSYLVANIA	
3	TN DE	: 1	MDL 2724	
4	IN RE:		CIVIL ACTION NO.	
5	GENERIC PHARMACEUTICALS PRICING ANTITRUST		16-MD-2724	
6	LITIGATION	: X	STATUS CONFERENCE	
7				
8	James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse Via videoconference			
9	July 9, 2020 Commencing at 1:40 p.m.			
10	BEFORE THE HONORABLE CYNTHIA M. RUFE			
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- 1 (Court called to order at 1:40 p.m.)
- 2 THE COURT: We will start this proceeding. For the
- 3 stenographer's benefit, it's nice to know when we're actually
- 4 starting something, so we'll call the status conference for the
- 5 MDL Generic Pharmaceuticals Pricing Antitrust Litigation to
- 6 convene.
- And we would like to address the joint proposed agenda
- 8 for the July hearing or meeting. I don't think it's an actual
- 9 hearing until we get to some oral argument later on.
- 10 So I would like to hear about the status of the
- 11 revised case management order negotiations.
- MR. COSTA: Thank you, Your Honor. This is Paul Costa
- 13 speaking for the plaintiffs.
- 14 Since our last general status conference in March, the
- 15 parties have been working very diligently to revise the
- 16 deadlines in the case management order.
- As the Court well knows, we are in very uncertain
- 18 times with COVID-19. And this MDL is fairly complex, and many
- 19 of the deadlines and issues in the case management order are
- 20 interrelated. And so what the parties have done is to try to
- 21 take this one step at a time in stages. And I think thus far
- 22 that -- I think that has been fairly successful in that we have
- 23 reached agreement on many issues and are making some good
- 24 progress.
- As the Court will recall, we first addressed the

- 1 deadline for the production of custodial documents. We were
- 2 able to reach an agreement, and we submitted that as a
- 3 stipulation to the Court, which was approved in Pretrial Order
- 4 123. It's my understanding that the Court did receive a full
- 5 briefing on that at the June leadership conference, so I won't
- 6 review that in any detail, but we'll only note that it did
- 7 vacate a number of the deadlines in the case management order
- 8 that we are now working hard to fill in.
- 9 We are currently discussing deadlines for the
- 10 production of privilege logs, for making confidentiality
- 11 designations and for making clawback requests.
- Regarding the privilege logs, the parties have reached
- 13 agreement for service of a series of rolling or incremental
- 14 privilege logs for the custodial documents that are being
- 15 withheld or redacted on the basis of attorney-client privilege
- 16 or as work product.
- 17 Regarding the confidentiality designations, the
- 18 parties have also agreed on some revised procedures and
- 19 deadlines.
- As the Court may recall, under the initial case
- 21 management order, PTO 105, the process was that defendants
- 22 would produce all of their documents under the highest level of
- 23 protection, outside counsel eyes only, and then had 120 days
- 24 afterwards to then redesignate them with the appropriate level
- 25 of protection as called for by the protective order. This was

- 1 the same process that was found in the AG Access Protocol, PTO
- 2 70, and that process was incorporated into PTO 105.
- 3 The parties discussed looking at different approaches
- 4 to that. Rather than having the defendants make these blanket
- 5 designations of all their documents and then redesignating
- 6 them, we talked about three different approaches.
- And the first approach, which we have agreed on, would
- 8 have a defendant elect to continue with the procedure in PTO
- 9 105 but would be given more time in which to redesignate its
- 10 documents. We agreed on two firm deadlines by which to make
- 11 those redesignations keyed off of the custodial document
- 12 production deadline instead of having rolling deadlines that
- 13 were keyed to each individual production which are going on on
- 14 a rolling basis.
- The second approach was that a defendant could elect
- 16 to make individualized confidentiality designations prior to
- 17 producing them, prior to producing their documents. So that
- 18 would mean that a defendant following this approach would have
- 19 its designations deemed permanent with whatever level of
- 20 protection was applied at the time of production and then
- 21 wouldn't have any further obligations during the subsequent
- 22 120-day period. They would just -- those documents would
- 23 maintain that level of protection. And this is -- we also have
- 24 agreed on this approach.
- We are also currently discussing a third proposed

- 1 approached for roughly ten defendants who have been applying
- 2 the confidentiality designations to their documents pursuant to
- 3 PTO 105 but feel that it's -- it's unduly burdensome for them
- 4 to perform the individualized review and redesignation process
- 5 that's currently in place. And the plaintiffs have agreed to
- 6 discuss those defendants' concerns and explore whether an
- 7 alternative procedure is workable or acceptable.
- 8 Turning to the clawbacks, the parties have also
- 9 negotiated --
- 10 THE COURT: Before you do --
- MR. COSTA: Sure.
- 12 THE COURT: Before you do, Mr. Costa, the initial
- 13 deadline to try to work out all of these newer updated
- 14 procedures is September, September 1st, I think.
- MR. COSTA: Correct.
- THE COURT: Does it appear to you that the
- 17 confidential designation in the old way that is perceived to be
- 18 burdensome pursuant to 105, is that doable? We have six weeks
- 19 left. Is it likely?
- MR. COSTA: Well, Your Honor, the parties are
- 21 continuing to discuss this issue, so I'm not -- I'm a little
- 22 bit hesitant to comment. And to be frank, I think this is more
- 23 a question for the defendants in that that's their -- you know,
- 24 their processes would probably dictate whether that's doable or
- 25 not.

- 1 THE COURT: I get that. Yeah, I get that.
- 2 But I wanted the plaintiffs' perspective on whether or
- 3 not you thought it could be achieved within that time period.
- 4 The renovation of these deadlines and these procedures
- 5 is supposed to come to an end, and I'm just wondering how it's
- 6 going given anything, pandemic or otherwise.
- 7 MR. COSTA: Well, I will say that in general, you
- 8 know, when we presented PTO -- the stipulation that turned into
- 9 PTO 123, it was our -- it was plaintiffs' sincere hope that the
- 10 deadlines that were presented to the Court would be firmly met
- 11 and that we wouldn't have additional delays in moving the case
- 12 forward.
- I don't know that the confidentiality designations is
- 14 necessarily something that is holding up the pace of discovery.
- 15 It is a complicating issue. I think as the Court well knows,
- 16 the confidentiality designations limit the parties' abilities
- 17 to use documents in certain ways and who they can be shared
- 18 with and so forth. So that I think is an issue that, you know,
- 19 we are going to continue to discuss with the defendants.
- If you're asking in the broader sense whether there
- 21 are concerns about timing, I think there are, from plaintiffs'
- 22 perspective. But again, that's something that we are engaged
- 23 in discussions with defendants about. And, you know, as
- 24 always, we hope to avoid disputes and try to reach
- 25 accommodations. And, you know, at this time, that's our

- 1 intention.
- 2 THE COURT: All right. I think you were going to
- 3 proceed to the clawback request.
- 4 Did you have anything that you wanted to add on that?
- 5 MR. COSTA: Yes. I was just going to summarize what
- 6 we have agreed on so far.
- We have agreed on some new procedures and deadlines
- 8 for defendants to request the clawbacks that they produced from
- 9 their custodial files under Section 3 of the case management
- 10 order.
- 11 We have agreed to eliminate the rolling deadlines that
- 12 are found in PTO 105 and instead allow defendants to issue
- 13 clawback requests within 120 days after each of the two
- 14 document production deadlines that are in PTO 123. This
- 15 provides the defendants with some additional time in which to
- 16 seek a clawback. And from an administrative standpoint, it
- 17 really does reduce confusion and administrative burdens by
- 18 setting only two deadlines instead of dozens of rolling
- 19 deadlines.
- We have also discussed a deadline for plaintiffs'
- 21 response to those clawback requests, though we have not yet
- 22 reached agreement. And we have been engaged in discussions
- 23 with the special masters to resolve this issue. And those
- 24 discussions are still ongoing under Mr. Marion's supervision.
- 25 So for these three topics, the privilege logs, the

- 1 confidentiality designations and the clawbacks, the parties are
- 2 working on a stipulation to memorialize our agreements. And
- 3 once we have agreed on appropriate language, we intend to
- 4 submit that to the Court for your consideration.
- 5 I do have --
- 6 SPECIAL MASTER MARION: Your Honor, may I interrupt on
- 7 the clawbacks, please?
- 8 THE COURT: Sure.
- 9 SPECIAL MASTER MARION: I just want to note that this
- 10 morning I issued an informal recommendation on the dispute that
- 11 was before me as to when the plaintiffs had to object to
- 12 clawback requests. And my informal recommendation may be
- 13 superseded by things that the parties have already agreed to.
- 14 But basically, in -- one thing that is missing from the -- from
- 15 the 105, the CMO, was the deadline for when the plaintiffs had
- 16 to object to clawback requests.
- And I proposed a -- recommended a proposal that
- 18 would -- from the date of September 1, the documents produced
- 19 prior to September 1, the defendants would have 60 days from
- 20 September 1 to ask for clawbacks as to those documents. And
- 21 the plaintiffs would have 60 days from those -- these are
- 22 primarily the first tier custodial documents. They would have
- 23 60 days from September 1 to object to them. But after that,
- 24 the clawback request would be on a rolling basis of 45 days
- 25 from production, and the objections to the clawbacks would be

- 1 on a rolling basis of 45 dates from receipt of the clawback
- 2 request.
- 3 The parties disagreed on that, and I don't know
- 4 whether they are reaching agreement that will be different from
- 5 my recommendation, but I was alarmed that under the plaintiffs'
- 6 proposal, the dates for -- they would have had until April 29,
- 7 2021, to object to the tier 1 custodial productions and until
- 8 July 14, 2021 to object to the remaining clawback requests.
- 9 Without repeating the arguments back and forth, I was
- 10 kind of alarmed by the distance from today of those two dates.
- 11 And I thought if we went on a rolling basis, both for
- 12 presentation of clawback requests and objections thereto, it
- 13 could be speeded up considerably. And also it would provide a
- 14 device whereby there would be early decisions on clawback
- 15 requests and the objections that would guide the parties and
- 16 reduce the number of objections thereafter as the later
- 17 documents are produced.
- So that may or may not be acceptable to the parties,
- 19 it may or may not be acceptable to the Court, but I thought
- 20 that was a reasonable compromise. And I also allowed for any
- 21 party on the defense or plaintiffs' side to show good cause as
- 22 to why they couldn't meet those deadlines, and we would
- 23 consider them and be reasonable in granting extensions.
- And I should also say, and Mr. Regard may elaborate on
- 25 this, that at present, there are somewhere over 11 million

- 1 documents already produced and a \$28 million target of
- 2 documents to be produced by the end of this process under
- 3 paragraph 3 of PT 105. And I was looking for a way to expedite
- 4 the closure of the production process so that we can get on to
- 5 other things.
- 6 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Marion.
- 7 SPECIAL MASTER MARION: The parties have not had a
- 8 chance to respond to that at all, but I did want to get it in
- 9 before this conference.
- THE COURT: Obviously specifics I'm not going to
- 11 discuss because you're working on them, but if Master Regard
- 12 wanted to say anything as Mr. Marion has indicated you may have
- 13 something else to say about it?
- 14 SPECIAL MASTER REGARD: No, ma'am, nothing in detail,
- 15 only that we are ready to work with the plaintiffs and the
- 16 defendants with any ideas to keep things on track.
- 17 THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you very much.
- I'm going to go back to you, Mr. Costa, because I'm
- 19 not sure you were completely finished.
- 20 MR. COSTA: I'm almost finished, Your Honor. I just
- 21 wanted to touch on a handful of additional discussions that are
- 22 ongoing.
- We are in the midst of discussing the scope and timing
- 24 of the production of defendants' sales transaction data and
- 25 cost information. We recently did seek the assistance of

- 1 Special Discovery Master Merenstein to address the scope of
- 2 those productions, and there is a call scheduled for tomorrow.
- 3 The parties are also discussing the next round of
- 4 document discovery. As Your Honor knows, the private
- 5 plaintiffs and the States in the past six months or so did file
- 6 additional Complaints that added additional drugs and
- 7 defendants to the MDL. And so the parties have been discussing
- 8 how to proceed with the next round of discovery to cover those
- 9 Complaints or those additional drugs and defendants in a fair
- 10 and efficient way.
- I will note that the private plaintiffs and the
- 12 defendants who were added to the MDL since last winter, we have
- 13 reached an agreement on the timing for defendants -- for those
- 14 defendants' responses to our document requests and
- 15 interrogatories and to begin our meet and confer profess. And
- 16 we are -- as far as the discovery relating to the rest of the
- 17 defendants, we are still discussing those next steps.
- So that is the update I have for the Court so far on
- 19 our case management negotiations, and I am happy to address any
- 20 questions that the Court may have.
- 21 THE COURT: Thank you. I did pose the question that I
- 22 had. And maybe there would be another.
- But I'd like to hear from the defense on this same
- 24 report. Thank you.
- MR. COSTA: Thank you, Your Honor.

- 1 MS. KIRKPATRICK: Good afternoon, Your Honor.
- 2 THE COURT: Who would like to address this?
- 3 MS. KIRKPATRICK: I'm sorry, Your Honor. This is
- 4 Sarah Kirkpatrick for the defendants.
- 5 THE COURT: Hello.
- 6 MS. KIRKPATRICK: In addition to all of what Mr. Costa
- 7 has described, the parties of course have been discussing the
- 8 discovery to be provided by plaintiffs.
- 9 In particular, as I think Your Honor knows, the State
- 10 Attorneys General, their discovery is particularly complicated,
- 11 and the parties have been engaged in almost weekly discussions
- 12 about the scope of that discovery. Those discussions are
- 13 making progress. We're also discussing the timing and the
- 14 deadlines that will apply to the States' document productions
- 15 pursuant to PTO 123.
- The private plaintiffs have been producing documents
- 17 on a rolling basis and have been making progress.
- The one note there is that Your Honor has pending
- 19 before you a dispute about the direct purchaser plaintiffs, the
- 20 scope of discovery and the search terms that those plaintiffs
- 21 will have to apply. So the parties are awaiting your ruling on
- 22 that in order to finalize the scope of private plaintiffs'
- 23 discovery.
- 24 THE COURT: Okay. What's the status of the briefing
- 25 in that?

- 1 MS. KIRKPATRICK: I believe the briefing was completed
- 2 I want to say maybe several weeks ago. I'm happy to look up
- 3 the date for you, but it was a little while ago it was
- 4 completed.
- 5 THE COURT: I haven't reviewed that as the package yet
- 6 with complete briefing, having reviewed it before and it was a
- 7 topic at at least one other conference. So we will look at
- 8 that to see if we can assist this in moving along because we
- 9 know that it's necessary to clarify.
- 10 MS. KIRKPATRICK: That would be great. Thank you,
- 11 Your Honor.
- 12 THE COURT: Thank you. Anyone else on this area?
- MR. BLECHMAN: Your Honor?
- 14 THE COURT: Yes.
- MR. BLECHMAN: Can I just give a reminder to everybody
- 16 that if you're not speaking to please be on mute. It will cut
- 17 down the feedback. Thank you.
- 18 THE COURT: I'm hearing feedback on the telephone
- 19 connection that I have next to my ear, and I don't know if
- 20 that's being pick up by the microphone on the video system.
- MR. BLECHMAN: It's easy to see who's on mute and
- 22 who's not by looking at the participant list. Everyone should
- 23 be on mute.
- THE COURT: Nicole just thinks she muted everybody.
- 25 Maybe she cut them off. I don't know. But I'm not hearing the

- 1 clicks anymore in my ear, so maybe that's where it was coming
- 2 from. Thank you.
- 3 So no one else on the status of revised case
- 4 management order negotiations? And if not, we will address the
- 5 schedules of future meetings, conferences and hearings.
- And we don't think that this is the summer to take off
- 7 August, because who is going to the south of France anyway?
- 8 I'm thinking that we work through. We did miss May.
- 9 I do think that we need to continue to have meetings to
- 10 complement the work that you're doing between yourselves and
- 11 with the masters, and I would prefer to continue and have a
- 12 status conference in August, which would be August 10th. And
- 13 that would be leadership. And then in September, I think what
- 14 is that date? Is that the 8th?
- I can't seem to find it. Just a moment.
- September 10th. August 13th perhaps, September 10th,
- 17 October 8th. At least we could go up two or three more months
- 18 and then regroup before we schedule definitively for November
- 19 and December because we may be scheduling oral argument in some
- 20 of these meetings, and that requires us to give more attention
- 21 and time to those.
- So I would ask if there's any strenuous objections to
- 23 continuing our current format and scheduling. And our next
- 24 conference, which would be leadership, would be August 13th.
- 25 Any objections to that?

- 1 MS. NAST: Your Honor, we've checked the calendar, and
- 2 there aren't any holidays or anything of concern on the August
- 3 date.
- 4 And did you say September 10?
- 5 THE COURT: Yes.
- 6 MS. NAST: There is also nothing to conflict with
- 7 that.
- 8 We were going to suggest October 8th, but I don't know
- 9 if you want to go into October yet or not.
- 10 THE COURT: I don't know why -- yes, I do. I do want
- 11 to go into October.
- MS. NAST: That would be a leadership conference? The
- 13 one in September is all hands on?
- 14 THE COURT: Yes, yes. And it's my suggestion that we
- 15 go into October and then hold up perhaps for next time November
- 16 and December.
- I don't know what we need to face in the very near
- 18 future. The pandemic has created many foils for people to
- 19 follow through in the earnest negotiations and meetings and
- 20 document discovery, review, et cetera. I know that is a fact.
- 21 All of us have felt the change in productivity, I think. And
- 22 while some of us have used this time to learn how to use
- 23 electronics, some of us have also felt the devastating loss of
- 24 the personal contact with colleagues and Court. And it was
- 25 only this week I returned to real live court on Monday. It was

- 1 joyous and sad at the same time because we all had masks on.
- 2 And it's difficult to perceive that this must continue into the
- 3 next coming six months, possibly a year, maybe we're waiting
- 4 for a vaccine.
- 5 We're all doing the best we can. And I appreciate all
- 6 the hard work that everyone does. But there is no case on my
- 7 docket that is more expansive, comprehensive and needs me than
- 8 this MDL with all the multitude of cases within it.
- 9 So I'm looking, as I always do, to you good counsel
- 10 and our special masters to help me do that, because it is easy
- 11 to put aside something this complex and say, I'll do it
- 12 tomorrow. I'm not doing that, even though it's difficult to
- 13 get things out as quickly as I'd like. But we're working on
- 14 that.
- 15 If anything working from home does for you, it
- 16 eliminates transportation time and gives me a chance to knock
- 17 off at least ten extra motions a week. And they're big
- 18 motions, not little ones.
- I don't know about you, but I found that when we
- 20 retired to working in our homes, that I ended up working from
- 21 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning till maybe 10:00, 11:00 at night
- 22 because it never stops and the emails are always coming. And I
- 23 began to feel like I was in private practice and there was no
- 24 turnoff time. So I'm afraid I revolted after a while and said,
- 25 no new emails after 5:30, but I still take them.

- 1 And there you go. So we're all trying. And I'm
- 2 probably trying harder, because I need to try harder. But it's
- 3 very difficult, I have to tell you. And I'm sorry that I can't
- 4 figure out a way to make things happen faster. So I'm relying
- 5 on you to give me the heads up when you see I really am needed
- 6 to help you do that.
- We have to discuss soon the bellwether trial system
- 8 here. And I have questions about not everything in the R&R,
- 9 which I told you last time we met I was inclined to accept and
- 10 adopt, but I do want to address that, because it seems to me in
- 11 MDL court -- and I may be a little philosophical for some of
- 12 you, but an MDL court has to be the one to try the cases first,
- 13 whether they be tried in the Eastern District of PA or tried in
- 14 the home jurisdiction, because that can be arranged. But it's
- 15 not going to be arranged in the time of a pandemic. One,
- 16 there's not going to be any jury trials; and two, we're so far
- 17 from that with all the class certification needs that I don't
- 18 think we even have to worry about it.
- But if we are going to spend and target attention,
- 20 time and resources to developing the discovery in order to
- 21 develop the motions and the necessary pretrial work in cases,
- 22 it behooves us to use cases that the Court can try herself.
- 23 And there comes Lexecon.
- 24 And I know it wasn't a consideration. Some of these
- 25 cases you don't have to consider it; they were filed directly

- 1 in the Eastern District of PA. I'm not talking about those.
- 2 But I'm talking about major cases to consider for bellwether
- 3 trials that may very well not be tried here or by me.
- 4 So that's really what I wanted to address. That's why
- 5 we entered that provisional order recommendation that you be
- 6 prepared to talk about that today, because what I see for our
- 7 future may be different than what you are all looking at, legal
- 8 strategies aside, legal advocacy for your clients aside. It
- 9 has to do with creating bellwether case lists that include
- 10 those cases that best represent the issues raised in this MDL.
- 11 That doesn't mean a party as much as it means the issues,
- 12 because that is where it becomes instructive and helpful for
- 13 the rest of the trials, the rest of the motions and of course
- 14 possible settlement. And that's what I want to hear about.
- So I would like to address that now, unless there's
- 16 something else, because we can end on the Lexecon issues. But
- 17 if somebody has something else they would like to ask me or
- 18 perhaps something to present that's not on this joint proposed
- 19 agenda, I'll hear you now, before we get into the legal
- 20 argument.
- I hear nothing. Maybe you're all on mute. I hear
- 22 nothing.
- MS. KIRKPATRICK: We are, Your Honor. We're ready to
- 24 go on to Lexecon. Thank you.
- 25 MR. PAK: I --

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1 THE COURT: Mr. Pak, did you wish to say something?
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- 2 MR. PAK: Yes, Your Honor. I was going to save this
- 3 one for the end because it's so anticlimactic compared to
- 4 Lexecon. It's truly a housekeeping matter.
- 5 THE COURT: Go ahead.
- 6 MR. PAK: It was just -- my understanding is that the
- 7 parties are working on dates for new Complaints, but the most
- 8 critical issue for us was just to confirm with Mr. Nielsen the
- 9 last Complaint that was filed and now transferred, I think it
- 10 was the Third Complaint, was the last Complaint that we'll see
- 11 in this MDL.
- 12 THE COURT: He said that. He did say that more than
- 13 once.
- Mr. Nielsen? Are you being questioned or --
- MR. NIELSEN: I'm not sure, but I'll stand by what I
- 16 said previously, which is that as of now, that -- that our plan
- 17 was that that was the last Complaint that we filed. And we
- 18 would expect that that's the last Complaint that would
- 19 certainly be part of this MDL anyway. You know, I can't really
- 20 bind my boss to never filing another Complaint related to price
- 21 fixing in the industry, but that's our intention, you know,
- 22 absent something unforeseen.
- THE COURT: Thank you.
- MR. PAK: Thank you.
- THE COURT: Was that all you needed to hear, Mr. Pak,

- 1 or was there some other part to your question?
- 2 MR. PAK: There was no more, Your Honor. Sorry for
- 3 the interruption.
- 4 THE COURT: No, you're not interrupting. I like
- 5 clarification as well. But I was resting on what I thought we
- 6 had been informed about earlier, thus, the June deadline was
- 7 met.
- 8 And as far as new Complaints that may be filed around
- 9 the country that are sent through the MDL panel to us to join
- 10 in this MDL, we can't control that. But as for Amended
- 11 Complaints, those last asserting overarching conspiracy, I
- 12 don't think we're going to see another one, not for some time.
- 13 So I'm hoping that we can deal with what we have, because those
- 14 are expansive and momentous enough in what they raise and how
- 15 to handle them.
- So that being said, I would like to hear from the
- 17 plaintiffs first on the Lexecon issues. And please tell me the
- 18 considerations that go into whether or not the cases that you
- 19 promote to be the bellwethers have any extenuating issues
- 20 relative to Lexecon.
- I'm not sure that I see that, but I'd like the
- 22 plaintiffs also to represent their observations about the
- 23 Lexecon issues as to the defendants, because I'd like to hear
- 24 from them -- from you on that as well.
- And who will argue for the plaintiffs?

- 1 MR. NIELSEN: Your Honor, Joe Nielsen from Connecticut
- 2 will be speaking. And then I think if I have missed anything,
- 3 possibly Jeff Istvan on behalf of the EPPs may want to add some
- 4 things.
- 5 But I can go ahead and address our view on Lexecon.
- 6 And, you know, I just want to make sure the Court understands
- 7 that we did consider Lexecon extensively as we went through the
- 8 process of selecting bellwether trials and as we met with
- 9 Special Master Marion and the defendants to talk through what
- 10 the criteria would be to select bellwether trials. And, you
- 11 know, as we're making proposals and modifying our proposals as
- 12 we went through the process, Lexecon was always there and it
- 13 was always an issue that we considered.
- But it became clear that, you know, by some point
- 15 through the process that every party to the MDL believed that
- 16 there should be a large overarching conspiracy case as a
- 17 bellwether and that the State plaintiffs should be a part of
- 18 such a bellwether trial. And so the Lexecon issues gave -- you
- 19 know, since they would apply equally to whatever State
- 20 overarching conspiracy case was part of the bellwether, the
- 21 Lexecon issues gave way to the priority of determining what
- 22 actually would be the most appropriate overarching conspiracy,
- 23 multidrug case to be the bellwether.
- Now, that said, I understand your concerns about
- 25 wanting to preside over the bellwether, in particular, you

- 1 know, the overarching conspiracy component of the bellwether.
- 2 And let me just say, you know, our proposal, which was
- 3 ultimately adopted by Special Master Marion, really sought to
- 4 put forward representative cases for the two different types of
- 5 cases that are pending in the MDL, the individual drug cases
- 6 which were filed in Philadelphia, and therefore, there are
- 7 really no Lexecon-related issues, and then an overarching
- 8 conspiracy bellwether, which based on all of our conversations
- 9 leading up to this process, we understood everyone believed
- 10 there should be an overarching conspiracy bellwether.
- So, you know, we focused on which case we thought
- 12 would be the most appropriate for that category of cases, but I
- 13 do recognize your desire to preside over the bellwether. And
- 14 I'll just say, from that perspective, we want that as well.
- 15 From the States' perspective, if our Teva case is selected as a
- 16 bellwether, we would want you to preside over that. And I
- 17 think there are -- as you mentioned, there are different ways
- 18 to accomplish that.
- 19 The States would consent to waive our Lexecon rights
- 20 to stay in Philadelphia for a trial of our Teva case. I don't
- 21 know whether the defendants would as well. You know, I expect
- 22 you'll hear from them on that. But they have proposed that our
- 23 Heritage overarching conspiracy case be a part of their
- 24 proposed bellwether, and I presume that they were proposing
- 25 that would happen in Philadelphia. So it is possible that all

- 1 parties would consent and waive their Lexecon rights and we
- 2 could have a trial and Lexecon would be a nonissue.
- 3 Even if the defendants do not consent to waive their
- 4 Lexecon rights, the States would be prepared, you know, once we
- 5 got through discovery and through summary judgment and we're
- 6 being sent for remand back to Connecticut, we would be willing
- 7 to apply a 1404 motion to transfer back to Philadelphia for
- 8 trial if necessary.
- 9 I know that, you know, the defendants have argued
- 10 strenuously already that these cases should be pending in
- 11 Philadelphia, so the standard would be, you know, the
- 12 convenience of the parties and the witnesses and whether it
- 13 would be in the interests of justice. I think we feel pretty
- 14 confident that we would be able to convince the District of
- 15 Connecticut the case should come back if necessary.
- And again, absent that, like you mentioned, there is a
- 17 possibility that, you know, even if we weren't successful in
- 18 those other two efforts, we'd love to have you come to
- 19 Connecticut and preside over a trial in Connecticut if you had
- 20 to and if you are willing to. You know, Connecticut is
- 21 beautiful most of the year, and we're currently I think the
- 22 lowest transmission rate of any state for COVID-19, so it would
- 23 be a very -- potentially very safe place to come and try a case
- 24 if we had to.
- THE COURT: You must be a good lawyer because that's a

- 1 great argument.
- 2 MR. NIELSEN: I try. I do feel safe here. And I will
- 3 say, I was apprehensive about coming down to Philadelphia if we
- 4 had to do that in person today, so I'm very happy that we were
- 5 able to figure out this technology to do it this way. But, you
- 6 know, someday we will have to see each other again in person.
- 7 So, you know, from our perspective, you know, we
- 8 really looked at it as everyone in the case was proposing an
- 9 overarching conspiracy bellwether that involved the State
- 10 plaintiffs. The State plaintiffs do want to participate in a
- 11 bellwether trial. We think that of all the groups, we're
- 12 obviously much more advanced in -- from a factual development
- 13 perspective. We've had our investigation. We've developed
- 14 cooperating witnesses. We would have the ability to move a
- 15 bellwether forward much more quickly and efficiently than
- 16 potentially other groups. So we think it is appropriate to be
- 17 in the bellwether.
- 18 We think there are a number of ways that we could have
- 19 you preside over a bellwether. And so we don't -- I don't,
- 20 frankly, believe Lexecon is an impediment to you adopting
- 21 Special Master Marion's recommended ruling and adopting our
- 22 Teva overarching conspiracy case as a bellwether.
- I would say regardless, at the end of the day, we as a
- 24 group of plaintiffs decided that regardless of where the case
- 25 is tried or who ultimately tries the case, that if you are

- 1 going to choose an overarching conspiracy case as a bellwether,
- 2 that the Teva case would be the best choice regardless,
- 3 because, you know, for all the reasons -- we don't need to
- 4 reargue all of those reasons why it is a better choice, but,
- 5 you know, we still thought regardless of where it's tried and
- 6 who it's tried in front of, it was the best choice, although we
- 7 would much prefer to be in front of you if at all possible.
- 8 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Nielsen.
- 9 Anyone else on behalf of plaintiffs?
- MR. ISTVAN: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Jeff Istvan
- 11 for the private plaintiffs.
- 12 THE COURT: Good afternoon.
- MR. ISTVAN: I have very little to add, just to
- 14 confirm that what you said in your order is correct, that
- 15 clobetasol, clomipramine and pravastatin cases are all original
- 16 cases to this district and they're here to stay. I didn't
- 17 understand you to want specific argument about those single
- 18 drug cases. Those seem to be noncontroversial.
- 19 And I would add that Joe is right, that we on the
- 20 plaintiffs' side have all thought all along that it's essential
- 21 for the States to be involved in the bellwether process. We
- 22 think that the largest plaintiff groups should be the
- 23 bellwether plaintiffs, and that would be the direct purchaser
- 24 plaintiffs, the end-payer plaintiffs and the States at a
- 25 minimum. And so our thinking is that Lexecon doesn't really

- 1 have anything to say about what would be an appropriate
- 2 bellwether.
- 3 And also regardless of where any case is tried, you
- 4 will issue all the decisions leading up to trial. And so, you
- 5 know, wherever the trial is and wherever the jury sits, we will
- 6 learn a lot about these cases from you before trial. And we'll
- 7 learn a lot about them from whichever the jury turns out to be.
- 8 THE COURT: Thank you very much.
- 9 All right. Then I will switch to the defense side.
- 10 And why do I think that Mr. Korpus wants to speak?
- MR. KORPUS: Thank you, Your Honor. Sharon Korpus.
- 12 Thank you for this very special edition of Hollywood Squares.
- 13 Very nice to see you.
- 14 THE COURT: Nice to see you too.
- MR. KORPUS: Let me start with the following. We
- 16 disagree that Lexecon was at all considered or even mentioned
- 17 in the many meetings, briefings, both before Special Master
- 18 Marion and before you. It was certainly not the focus of the
- 19 discussion that I can recall, and I attended every single
- 20 meeting. I did hear Mr. Nielsen say that he would be willing
- 21 to try the case in Philadelphia, but certainly it was not
- 22 something that defendants focused on. We really focused on the
- 23 pretrial process leading up to summary judgment. And that's
- 24 our mistake. We should have considered it earlier. And I
- 25 thank the Court for flagging it, but it is not something that

- 1 we considered.
- Now that you have raised it, we have spoken. We are
- 3 not in a position to waive our Lexecon rights for cases that
- 4 were not filed directly into this district. There are many
- 5 defendants. All of them would need to agree, and at this point
- 6 I'm not aware that anybody has come out and said we're willing
- 7 to waive our Lexecon right.
- 8 And I think where that leaves the Court is that in
- 9 order to select a bellwether that the Court can preside over --
- 10 and we understand why the Court would want to preside over at
- 11 least the first bellwether, if not a series of bellwethers --
- 12 then we have to look at cases that were filed in this district.
- And when we consider the cases that were filed in this
- 14 district, the one thing that I do agree with Mr. Nielsen on is
- 15 that we should choose an overarching conspiracy case since that
- 16 is the heart of this MDL these days. This is where all the
- 17 disputes have been, where all the issues have been, where the
- 18 discovery has been.
- And in order for the Court to be able to preside over
- 20 an overarching conspiracy case filed in this district, we
- 21 submit that the most viable candidates are the private
- 22 plaintiffs class actions raising overarching conspiracies which
- 23 are the DPPs, IRPs, and EPPs. And we believe all three of them
- 24 should be the ones selected.
- Now, for all the reasons we briefed before, it is our

- 1 position that the Heritage-based overarching conspiracy cases
- 2 are a much more manageable set of cases to take on as a
- 3 bellwether. Like Mr. Nielsen didn't go into the reasons why he
- 4 believes it should be the Teva-centric ones, I'm not going to
- 5 go into all the reasons that we briefed before about the
- 6 Heritage ones, but we do believe that it should be the
- 7 overarching conspiracy cases, preferably the Heritage ones. If
- 8 not, then I guess the Teva-centric ones.
- 9 We do not believe that having the individual
- 10 conspiracy cases as bellwethers really advances the ball much
- 11 because then there won't be any overarching conspiracy trial
- 12 before the Court, and we would have to wait for all that to be
- 13 done before we consider.
- I have not thought about the issues of either transfer
- 15 from Connecticut and what we would do about it or any of the
- 16 circuit appointment by -- which I think has to be done by Chief
- 17 Justice Roberts, if I'm not mistaken.
- 18 THE COURT: Yes.
- 19 MR. KORPUS: I don't have views on that. But we
- 20 believe it should be the private plaintiff.
- Now, this is not an unusual dynamic. I want to leave
- 22 you with some case law. Because when you look at how other
- 23 courts have addressed that issue -- for example, in the
- 24 Southern District of New York, there's a current MDL pending
- 25 called Zimmer M/L Taper Hip. And let me give you the cite

- 1 since we didn't get a chance to brief this. 2019 US District
- 2 Lexus 202294 SDNY 2019.
- 3 In that case Judge Crotty provided the parties with a
- 4 mechanism where the only cases that would be in the bellwether
- 5 pool and then chosen randomly were cases that would be
- 6 selected -- would be cases that were filed directly into that
- 7 district. And he overruled objections from defendants in that
- 8 case that the plaintiffs were biasing the pool by only taking
- 9 the cases directly filed. And he cited Lexecon saying that is
- 10 the reason why, to avoid a Lexecon problem.
- Similarly, in a case called Re: Fosamax Product
- 12 Liability Litigation, 815 F.Supp. 2d 649, Judge Keenan directed
- 13 the parties to select cases for expedited treatment that were
- 14 eligible for inclusion in the bellwether trial pool only if
- 15 there was a Lexecon waiver or they were filed into the
- 16 district.
- 17 So this is a dynamic that judges are faced with. And
- 18 we would suggest that it's met by dealing with the cases filed
- 19 in this district.
- Where does that leave the AGs? We're going to be
- 21 engaged in discovery for many months to come. The AGs' cases
- 22 can go through discovery in parallel with the private
- 23 plaintiffs' cases on which -- prioritizing whichever discovery
- 24 Your Honor chooses as a bellwether, be it Heritage or Teva.
- 25 They'll participate fully in discovery. At that point I

- 1 assume -- and there will be class certification motions a
- 2 little before the end of discovery per the schedule. And then
- 3 all cases will go before you for summary judgment.
- And at that point, the bellwether trials would proceed
- 5 of the three classes. And it's important to know that I'm
- 6 saying the three classes, because the R&R only has two, but you
- 7 really need to try the three together because there could be
- 8 overlapping damages and we don't want to be in a position where
- 9 there is double counting of damages against us. So we think it
- 10 is important that all three class proceed together.
- So at that point we would have a trial of the three
- 12 class actions. And once that's done, at that point it would be
- 13 a proper time for Mr. Nielsen to try his case in Connecticut.
- 14 That would be our proposal.
- 15 THE COURT: Thank you.
- Anyone else on the defense side that would like to
- 17 speak up?
- MR. PAK: Your Honor, Chul Pak, if I could just add
- 19 one added point to what Mr. Korpus has said.
- One of the benefits management-wise of the proposal
- 21 that he outlined is if you proceed with the private plaintiffs
- 22 cases that were filed in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
- 23 on the overarching conspiracy cases, overarching conspiracy for
- 24 class certification is also a significant issue.
- 25 So under the proposal that he outlined, we would be

- 1 addressing class certification on an overarching conspiracy
- 2 case, whereas the current recommendation does not address class
- 3 certification on an overarching conspiracy case.
- 4 But we think that's a significant issue in this
- 5 litigation that Your Honor should entertain.
- 6 THE COURT: Thank you.
- 7 MR. KORPUS: And I did neglect to say -- I'm sorry.
- 8 THE COURT: Go ahead.
- 9 MR. KORPUS: I did neglect to mention on the
- 10 individual conspiracy cases that were proposed by the private
- 11 plaintiffs, it is our view that in trying an overarching
- 12 conspiracy case, by definition, you also need to try the
- 13 individual conspiracies as part of that conspiracy.
- 14 So we think you would be informing the parties of the
- 15 risk and rewards of those alleged conspiracies by trying the
- 16 overarching cases.
- And you did receive a letter concerning pravastatin in
- 18 particular from Glenmark, I believe. I don't know if you saw
- 19 that.
- 20 THE COURT: I did. I did.
- 21 One second.
- You mentioned Glenmark. I was going to bring that up.
- Glenmark had a letter submitted that I already knew
- 24 the situation because DOJ did inform the Court, I guess it was
- 25 yesterday, might have been the day before, concerning a new

- 1 indictment here in the EDPA concerning Glenmark, also filed and
- 2 assigned to Judge Barclay Surrick, a colleague on this court
- 3 who is handling the other indictments in this area and nature.
- And I don't have any other information. That is
- 5 public. It's been filed. It's a grand jury indictment, so it
- 6 is not private or confidential information any longer.
- 7 And of course I understand that in any case where
- 8 indictment might be pending or investigation is pending,
- 9 there's always Fifth Amendment considerations. But for
- 10 example, we know that we can work through some of those.
- 11 Whether you agree with a special master or whether I have to
- 12 rule on it, there's a way to do that ad hoc, case by case. I
- 13 see no reason that is a blanket stay on any discovery and even
- 14 motions practice if that's the case.
- I want you to know that at this point, in all the
- 16 years of investigation, there can't possibly be a stay of all
- 17 civil litigation, unless it's really so permeated that nothing
- 18 can happen. And I don't know that yet. So I wouldn't be
- 19 granting a stay on any particular cases right now just because
- 20 there are indictments and convictions in some of those cases.
- MR. KORPUS: We understand, Your Honor. We are
- 22 talking about a selection of bellwether and not a stay, which I
- 23 think raises different considerations.
- 24 THE COURT: Yes, it does. But I thought I should
- 25 bring that up so everyone could know what I was thinking.

- 1 And someone on the telephone does want to speak.
- Who is it?
- 3 MR. REED: Your Honor, forgive me for interrupting.
- 4 It's Steve Reed on behalf of Glenmark.
- 5 THE COURT: You are not interrupting. I'm welcoming
- 6 your interruption.
- 7 Yes?
- 8 MR. REED: I did speak over people and I apologize.
- 9 So Your Honor, I appreciate the opportunity to address
- 10 the issue.
- 11 First, one point of clarification, there is no grand
- 12 jury indictment. DOJ chose to proceed by way of information.
- 13 That's an issue that was raised with Judge Surrick and --
- 14 (Court reporter clarification.)
- THE COURT: We're going to move up the volume and ask
- 16 you to repeat that because I do think it's important.
- You didn't have much after that, did you?
- If that's an information, my understanding of the
- 19 filing of informations is that's by consent. Otherwise, you
- 20 have to get a grand jury.
- MR. REED: Your Honor, that's Glenmark's understanding
- 22 to be well. But to be clear, Glenmark did not consent to
- 23 proceed by way of information. So that is an issue that we
- 24 have raised and intend to address with Judge Surrick.
- It's not, Your Honor, I think germane to the issue

- 1 that we're discussing here, but I did want to be clear on the
- 2 record.
- 3 THE COURT: You're right. It's not germane to
- 4 Lexecon. And thank you, Mr. Reed.
- 5 I do think it's an anomaly, and Judge Surrick is going
- 6 to figure that one out.
- 7 MR. REED: Your Honor, if I may continue, just for a
- 8 moment.
- 9 THE COURT: Yes, Mr. Reed.
- MR. REED: It's Steve Reed.
- On the other point, we appreciate and obviously we'll
- 12 respect your quidance on a stay.
- Just to be clear, Glenmark is not at this time seeking
- 14 a stay. We thought it was important to call this issue here to
- 15 your attention promptly as you're considering the selection of
- 16 bellwethers for the reasons set forth in my letter, and I'm
- 17 happy to elaborate. We think the fact that there is a criminal
- 18 proceeding, given the Fifth Amendment concerns that you
- 19 recognize, concerns about expanding the scope of criminal
- 20 discovery and the limits of Rule 16(b) of the Rules of Criminal
- 21 Procedure but with parallel civil issues, for a host of
- 22 reasons, we think pravastatin is an unsuitable and equally
- 23 wrong choice as a bellwether.
- Although that's the point we wanted to raise this
- 25 development with you as you consider choosing among the various

- 1 options for bellwethers, we respectfully submit that
- 2 pravastatin should not be a bellwether for the reasons we've
- 3 stated.
- 4 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Reed. You did state very
- 5 clearly in your letter that you were not seeking a stay on
- 6 behalf of Glenmark to stay all proceedings. And you copied
- 7 this to many other counsel, plaintiffs, defense, special
- 8 masters, so I wasn't worried about bringing this up.
- 9 But it brings to mind the number of opportunities
- 10 there are to -- roadblocks in terms of depositions primarily
- 11 and other types of discovery.
- And I know that Special Master Merenstein has dealt
- 13 with a few of these.
- I do think that we can do with a few less of those
- 15 roadblocks by carefully choosing bellwethers. But in no way,
- 16 shape or form does the selection of bellwether trials create a
- 17 pass or an unofficial stay for any other case. Discovery is to
- 18 not just commence but to be vigorously sought in as many cases
- 19 as possible, in as comprehensive and consolidated a way as
- 20 possible.
- 21 So we are happy that -- to receive the information
- 22 that you imparted, Mr. Reed. And we will certainly consider
- 23 your request not to include Glenmark in a bellwether, not at
- 24 this moment, anyway.
- Thank you.

- 1 And was there another person on the telephone --
- 2 Was there another person on the telephone?
- 3 MR. DeMATTEO: Yes, Your Honor. This is Tom DeMatteo
- 4 from DOJ.
- 5 THE COURT: Oh, I didn't know you were on the phone.
- 6 I would have called on you earlier.
- 7 MR. DeMATTEO: No problem. I just wanted to confirm
- 8 that it was an information and also just to reiterate DOJ's
- 9 position as we filed our statement of interest back in March.
- 10 We don't take a position on what the best case for the
- 11 bellwether is. And the parties can keep with discovery to
- 12 prioritize depositions unaffected by the stay. You know, any
- 13 bellwether selected should be able to progress efficiently.
- 14 THE COURT: Thank you. I think that's clear. Thank
- 15 you very much.
- MR. DeMATTEO: You're welcome, Your Honor.
- 17 THE COURT: Now we'll go back to you, Mr. Istvan.
- 18 MR. ISTVAN: I just wanted to respond briefly about
- 19 Glenmark.
- We don't think that the information against Glenmark
- 21 changes the suitability of pravastatin as a bellwether at all.
- 22 As you know, the DOJ investigation is ongoing. The
- 23 next DOJ information or indictment could easily involve one of
- 24 the other single drug cases that are pending here. So the fact
- 25 that pravastatin has now been selected and identified as one in

- 1 which there was criminal wrongdoing doesn't seem to me to
- 2 change anything.
- 3 We briefed fairly extensive the individual defendants'
- 4 arguments because of the potential of criminal indictment they
- 5 should not have to participate in a bellwether.
- The same arguments apply to Glenmark. They don't get
- 7 a pass on civil litigation or a delay on civil litigation
- 8 simply because they might get indicted or that there's an
- 9 information. Right? All of the defendants are in that same
- 10 situation. They all might get indicted. There might be an
- 11 information against any of them.
- And then with respect to Glenmark's witnesses, there
- 13 are some Glenmark witnesses. There are some witnesses from
- 14 every defendant that are on the DOJ's list that they want
- 15 deferred.
- The pravastatin information didn't change anything on
- 17 that list. They're all the same witnesses. No one has been
- 18 added or subtracted. If anything, it's possible that the
- 19 pravastatin -- the DOJ's pravastatin piece may go faster than
- 20 the others.
- 21 And also there's another defendant, Apotex, which has
- 22 been the subject of DOJ investigation and action. And Apotex
- 23 has a deferred prosecution agreement on pravastatin and has
- 24 admitted liability.
- 25 And therefore, it's possible -- it's possible, right,

- 1 that more witnesses might actually testify on pravastatin than
- 2 on some of the other drugs, because certain defendants'
- 3 liability with respect to the criminal investigation has
- 4 already been determined on pravastatin. So we think if
- 5 anything, the argument in favor of pravastatin is stronger now
- 6 that the case is more developed with the DOJ and there's less
- 7 uncertainty.
- 8 THE COURT: Thank you. I appreciate your comments.
- 9 MR. REED: Your Honor, may I address -- Steve Reed
- 10 again. May I address that briefly?
- 11 THE COURT: Yes. Mr. Reed and then to you, Mr.
- 12 Blechman.
- MR. REED: I shouldn't have to say this, but it sounds
- 14 like I need to.
- The fact that there is an information filed means
- 16 there are allegations of wrongdoing. There's no evidence of
- 17 criminal conduct with respect to pravastatin or otherwise.
- 18 These are allegations. They overlap with the allegations in
- 19 the civil claims, and that's precisely why we believe that
- 20 pravastatin is a poor choice as a bellwether.
- 21 Glenmark is not looking for any kind of pass in this
- 22 MDL. We expect to participate in discovery as we have been.
- 23 We're talking rather specifically about a product that is
- 24 directly at issue in a criminal proceeding. It's customary, as
- 25 I'm sure Your Honor knows. You have discretion when -- it is

- 1 not unusual for a judge who is presiding over a civil matter to
- 2 allow the criminal matter to proceed first for pretty obvious
- 3 concerns. But again, what we're -- we're not asking for a
- 4 stay. We're suggesting that there are a number of choices the
- 5 Court has as bellwethers. I'm not going to reargue this point,
- 6 which have been briefed extensively and argued extensively.
- 7 But as you consider which would be the most productive,
- 8 informative bellwethers to move this MDL along, I would
- 9 respectively submit that pravastatin shouldn't be among them,
- 10 because it presents unique challenges. Right now the fact that
- 11 other criminal informations or indictments might be filed in
- 12 the future is a fact that we all have to deal with. But why
- 13 would the Court want to buy into a known problem now because of
- 14 the concerns about the potential but unknown problems in the
- 15 future.
- 16 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Reed.
- 17 Mr. Blechman?
- MR. BLECHMAN: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you, very much.
- 19 I had my phone on mute before when plaintiffs were speaking. I
- 20 didn't figure out how to unmute it in time, so thank you for
- 21 the opportunity.
- I wanted to note in connection with the bellwethers
- 23 the special master's report and recommendation notes on page 4,
- 24 Footnote 4, that the Kroger Direct Action Plaintiffs, which
- 25 include Kroger, Albertsons and HEB, all of whom have a

- 1 significant number of retail pharmacies and significant direct
- 2 purchase claims, that we desire to participate in the
- 3 bellwether proceedings as well, unless it becomes infeasible or
- 4 causes delay.
- 5 We have pending before the Court a motion to amend to
- 6 add a Second Amended Complaint which contains among the counts
- 7 a mirror image Teva-centric overarching conspiracy claim.
- 8 That's at Docket Entry Number 196 in the individual case that
- 9 we have filed.
- And our inclusion in bellwether to the extent that
- 11 that occurs we think makes it more inclusive. We think the
- 12 States are actually okay with this. And we'll make -- provide
- 13 for more guidance in terms of what the bellwether results
- 14 provide.
- So we want to be involved in the discussion, the
- 16 planning, the scheduling and the implementation of the
- 17 bellwethers, unless, as the special master notes, it creates
- 18 unreasonable complications or delay.
- 19 It does not implicate Lexecon issues, Your Honor,
- 20 because we filed the Kroger Direct Action Plaintiffs Complaint
- 21 in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. However, if the case
- 22 ends up as the bellwether going to the District of Connecticut,
- 23 then we would have to address 1404 motions or other potential
- 24 procedural devices.
- Thank you.

- 1 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.
- 2 Mr. Nielsen, did you wish to say anything?
- 3 MR. NIELSEN: So am I -- I'm not on mute. Okay.
- 4 Yeah. No. I think we have evolved well away from the
- 5 Lexecon issues into the merits of bellwether briefing. But I
- 6 just -- I want to address at least these Fifth Amendment issues
- 7 to just point out, you know, these have been extensively
- 8 briefed. And the Fifth Amendment implications apply equally to
- 9 any other bellwether in this MDL, in particular the Heritage
- 10 case. A number of the most important witnesses in that case
- 11 are either on the DOJ list or they are -- have indicated they
- 12 will plead the Fifth in deposition. So those issues I don't
- 13 think have a real significant, you know, impact on which case
- 14 is selected as a bellwether.
- And then just one other point I wanted to make with
- 16 regard to Special Master Marion's recommendation. You know,
- 17 all of these issues about the timing of the cases and
- 18 everything that was proposed by Mr. Korpus were extensively
- 19 considered by the special master. And I think his proposal is
- 20 ingenious in some respects in that, you know, it will move
- 21 different cases forward much more quickly than the defendants'
- 22 proposal.
- The proposal that Mr. Korpus made during his oral
- 24 argument was that, you know, we proceed with a class action
- 25 overarching conspiracy bellwether. And that -- you know, the

- 1 effect of that would be that the States' case and any direct
- 2 action cases that aren't affected by class action would in
- 3 essence be stayed during the pendency of class action
- 4 proceedings, and we wouldn't even be allowed to proceed to
- 5 summary judgment until after those class action issues were
- 6 resolved on appeal and otherwise all the way up, which could be
- 7 years of delay, whereas Special Master Marion proposed that the
- 8 States' Teva case would be able to go forward unaffected by the
- 9 class action issues, which would move that case forward much
- 10 more quickly, which is really one of the fundamental goals I
- 11 think of a bellwether and one of the considerations the Court
- 12 should have, how do we move this MDL forward in the most
- 13 representative way and in the most efficient and quick way.
- So I just wanted to make those points relating to --
- 15 those are non-Lexecon issues, but it seems that we've gone that
- 16 way in the oral argument.
- 17 THE COURT: Well, sometimes you can't separate
- 18 everything without more difficulty.
- And quite frankly, the Court's role is to combine all
- 20 of these considerations, Lexecon included.
- 21 And yes, it's not that I will make this decision based
- 22 on only whether I can try the case or not. They have to be the
- 23 right issues in the most comprehensive cases to give us enough
- 24 information to help guide the rest of the litigation. So that
- 25 means they have to have those commonalities and connections.

- 1 And I never took issue with the R&R on that.
- 2 It's really -- I wanted to know what counsel and their
- 3 clients were willing to do, because that is a basic
- 4 consideration of an MDL judge. And if I'm going to go through
- 5 the administrative hoops of proving to the USSC Chief Justice
- 6 that he should approve me to go try a case in Connecticut,
- 7 California, or dare I say it again, the south of France, I
- 8 really want to know why I should ask that question. Do I have
- 9 to ask that question? Isn't there something else I could have
- 10 done to avoid that kind of mechanism?
- And you know, there are good judges all over our
- 12 federal judicial system, and I never doubt the capability of a
- 13 judge in any other federal district court being able to try one
- 14 of these cases. But they have busy dockets too. They may even
- 15 have their own MDLs. But it has been done before. It has
- 16 never been a preclusion to me considering the recommendations
- 17 in the R&R or any of your arguments. It is simply is it the
- 18 best case plus is it Lexecon friendly.
- And I know the answers to those questions, and I have
- 20 heard very clearly that some plaintiffs will probably waive
- 21 Lexecon and right now no defendants are waiving Lexecon. So
- 22 maybe defendants get to try their cases all over the country.
- 23 I don't know. But that is their right, their position. And
- 24 then there are other mechanisms, but I don't even want to
- 25 consult them now. I want to get the best cases moving forward.

- 1 That's where I am with this.
- And so you've satisfied my questions. And I will take
- 3 this matter briefly under advisement, and you will get a swift
- 4 response from me, because we pretty much had devoured all of
- 5 the briefing on the R&R and the other considerations. So it's
- 6 time to move this on. And we will all together move on.
- 7 So with that being said, is there anything else to
- 8 address today, Counsel?
- 9 MR. COSTA: Your Honor, Paul Costa for the plaintiffs.
- I apologize, I did just want to circle back to an
- 11 issue relating to the case management and specifically with
- 12 respect to the discussion of the States' final Complaint and
- 13 Mr. Pak's question.
- I wanted to ensure that you were clear on the
- 15 landscape when it comes to the private plaintiffs as well.
- This is part of the discussions that we're having with
- 17 the defendants regarding the discovery going forward. And I
- 18 wanted to let you know that the end-payer plaintiffs do intend
- 19 to file an Amended Complaint that will bring it in line with
- 20 the current scope of drugs and defendants that are in the MDL
- 21 in our next Complaint. We do not intend to add any additional
- 22 drugs or defendants, and so we don't think it will be -- it
- 23 will prevent any progress being made from discovery. And
- 24 that's been -- as I said, that's been part of our ongoing
- 25 discussions with defendants which are not yet final. But in

- 1 light of your comments earlier, I wanted to make sure that you
- 2 understood where we are on that issue.
- 3 THE COURT: So Mr. Pak was talking about something
- 4 that was out there and hasn't been done yet? Because I thought
- 5 that the Amended Complaints were pretty much done. I thought.
- 6 so --
- 7 MR. BLECHMAN: Your Honor -- go ahead, Paul.
- 8 THE COURT: Mr. Costa, you get to respond to that, if
- 9 you want.
- MR. COSTA: Yes. I understood Mr. Pak's question to
- 11 be directed to the States and asked whether they were finished
- 12 filing additional Complaints. And I understood Mr. Nielsen to
- 13 say yes.
- The States' most recent Complaint added approximately
- 15 15 additional drugs to the MDL. That's on top of the several
- 16 dozen that were added by the EPPs, the DPPs and some other
- 17 private plaintiffs in the last six months or so. What we're
- 18 talking about for the EPPs is amending the existing Complaints
- 19 in order to bring them in line with the universe of drugs that
- 20 are in the MDL. So it's not to expand the MDL in any way or to
- 21 broach new ground in discovery but rather to bring our
- 22 Complaints in line with all of the current allegations and
- 23 claims in the MDL.
- 24 So to the extent that -- I think from our perspective,
- 25 progress and the, you know, efficient conduct of discovery, it

- 1 requires that we have a defined universe of drugs and
- 2 defendants. That's something that we've talked about with
- 3 defendants. And that is -- consistent with that, that's our
- 4 plan, to amend the Complaint to keep the -- confine our claims
- 5 to what's currently in the MDL and not expand them.
- 6 THE COURT: And do I dare ask this next question, does
- 7 that mean that you would not be duplicating cases and claims?
- 8 But would that not -- if you were consolidating all of
- 9 these, would that not eliminate some of the prior cases?
- MR. COSTA: No, Your Honor. It would -- for the EPPs,
- 11 our last -- our last Complaint was filed in December of 2019.
- 12 That case would not be eliminated. We would just be amending
- 13 the claims in that Complaint. That's our intent in terms of
- 14 our next move with respect to Complaints.
- 15 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
- And then Mr. Blechman?
- 17 MR. BLECHMAN: Thank you very much, Your Honor.
- 18 A couple points of clarification.
- I agree with Mr. Costa. I heard Mr. Pak -- I
- 20 interpreted his remarks as referring to the States and whether
- 21 they were filing any Complaints after the third that they have
- 22 filed.
- But in the interest of clarity and to make sure that
- 24 the Court is fully informed, the Kroger Direct Action
- 25 Plaintiffs, we intend to amend to bring into the case the

- 1 additional drugs that also are reflected in the States' Third
- 2 Complaint.
- Because I told you earlier, Your Honor, that we have a
- 4 motion for leave to amend that had been filed on January 30th.
- 5 And I don't want the Court to do work it doesn't need to do.
- 6 Our expectation is that we will be filing a motion for leave to
- 7 amend to -- and essentially substitute but to file a proposed
- 8 Amended Complaint that builds out the additional drugs in much
- 9 the same way that Mr. Costa was referring to.
- In the pleading that we had filed earlier that's the
- 11 subject of the motion for leave to amend, we added a plaintiff,
- 12 Smith Drug Company. That has created some procedural issues
- 13 and some discovery issues I won't burden the Court with, but in
- 14 the interest of just making -- simplifying this, what we'll do
- 15 at that time is we'll also file a Complaint on behalf of Smith
- 16 Drug Company. But the legacy direct action plaintiffs, Kroger,
- 17 Albertsons, HEB, will be the subject of a motion for leave to
- 18 amend to conform with those other drugs and align with what's
- 19 been done in the MDL and as filed by the States most recently.
- Finally, Your Honor, it's my belief that other direct
- 21 action plaintiffs will on a timetable consistent with what is
- 22 the proposed case management order that the parties are
- 23 negotiating will themselves be filing either an amendment or an
- 24 additional Complaint to likewise align with the additional
- 25 drugs and allegations that are now part of the MDL as reflected

- 1 in the States' Third Complaint.
- 2 Thank you for the opportunity, Your Honor, to clarify
- 3 that.
- 4 MR. KORPUS: Your Honor, if may I respond.
- 5 THE COURT: Yes, you may.
- 6 MR. KORPUS: So yet again you see why we have such
- 7 difficulties in this MDL.
- 8 And Mr. Blechman started this call by asking you to
- 9 rule on the motion to amend, which now I guess he's telling you
- 10 he doesn't want you to rule on because he's filing yet a new
- 11 Complaint. We opposed his last motion to amend, and I am sure
- 12 we will be opposing this one.
- That's all I had to say.
- 14 THE COURT: Understood.
- I find it -- the prayer that I had at least two years
- 16 ago was can we get all of this in line. And it is an expansive
- 17 area of investigation and activity that's been alleged here.
- I was hoping that June was the cutoff, but I am too
- 19 long in the tooth to believe that it would ever be the end.
- I am surprised to hear this, but if it's to clean
- 21 up -- let me just use that phrase, not like it's a mess right
- 22 now, but because it's so confused, one would have a very
- 23 difficult time choosing the perfect vehicle to be a bellwether.
- 24 If it were to permit these amendments so that we could get the
- 25 most updated allegations and the most updated defense, we might

- 1 all be able to end this in ten years.
- I'm sad to say that, because I don't know how long
- 3 I'll stick around here. However, I have taken this on, and
- 4 maybe -- maybe this is what I take with me to the other world.
- 5 I don't know. And I don't want it to be.
- 6 MR. KORPUS: I hope not.
- 7 THE COURT: We can't do justice that way. We can't do
- 8 justice that way. We have to figure out a way to cut through
- 9 this.
- And I know the special masters have been focused on
- 11 that, to target discovery to get best type of response and the
- 12 best way possible so that the case can move on and to select
- 13 bellwethers that truly represent what there is.
- I don't hear in any of the amendments that may be
- 15 pending that there is a change in the primary allegation of
- 16 overarching conspiracy. I am hearing you want to add or drop
- 17 claims or parties specifically.
- And the sooner you do that, the better. And I may
- 19 just have to put a date on this that is realistic. And I don't
- 20 know what that is yet, but I'm going to have to, because I want
- 21 it to stop. It's going to have to stop.
- 22 And I may just be too tired after a long day of video
- 23 hearings to actually think through what that date is right now,
- 24 but it might very well be October 1st. I won't be cruel enough
- 25 to do September 1st. I don't think that's realistic anyway.

- 1 But there's always exceptions to every rule and every
- 2 order. And if there were good cause, I could reconsider that
- 3 if it were presented to me. But I think I'm going to have to
- 4 drop that line and figure out when that date is, or we will
- 5 never get past where we have to get past.
- And this is for all parties' sake. I mean, defendants
- 7 want clarity too. If they want to get anybody out of this and
- 8 cleared, it's not going to happen while they're still being
- 9 added by yet another group.
- 10 So I'm willing to consider a deadline now. I thought
- 11 June was a pretty good aim, but that did not include the
- 12 additional problematic addition of Smith in your case, Mr.
- 13 Blechman. That's a different issue.
- 14 So all right.
- MR. KORPUS: So Your Honor, we would just request that
- 16 when you do come up with a date, that it's clear that it
- 17 includes both type of animals. We have Mr. Blechman who is
- 18 filing Amended Complaints and we have the other private
- 19 plaintiffs who are filing new Complaints. And we would like
- 20 the date to apply to all of them so that we know finally what
- 21 is the scope of this MDL.
- 22 THE COURT: Yes. We will probably have to pick up on
- 23 this discussion if not before at our next monthly leadership
- 24 conference.
- So let's dig in and find out what we can find out and

- 1 then see if there's some closure we can bring to some of this,
- 2 I never suspect all of this. But I know that cases can be
- 3 filed still for a very long time. I'm dealing with statutes of
- 4 limitations, which would prevent some of this. But we really
- 5 do have to move on it.
- 6 MR. ISTVAN: Your Honor, may I offer one
- 7 clarification?
- 8 THE COURT: Yes.
- 9 MR. ISTVAN: With respect to the bellwethers, these
- 10 proposed upcoming Amended Complaints don't have anything to do
- 11 with any of the cases that Special Master Marion has selected
- 12 bellwether. The States' Teva Complaint is going to remain as
- 13 is, as are the EPP and DPP clomipramine, clobetasol and
- 14 pravastatin Complaints. They will remain unchanged.
- 15 THE COURT: Thank you for the clarification.
- 16 Before I --
- MS. LEVINE: Your Honor, I also -- it's Jan Levine --
- 18 had one clarification that I heard in the bellwether
- 19 discussion.
- 20 So while Your Honor is considering these issues, I
- 21 just want to make sure that the issue that Mr. Blechman raised
- 22 in terms of the bellwether, can he confirm that he would be
- 23 only seeking to move forward as part of the bellwether his
- 24 claims to the extent whatever operative Complaint he's talking
- 25 about is co-terminus with the States' Teva AG Complaint, not

- 1 broadening it?
- 2 MR. BLECHMAN: Your Honor, I only heard part of that.
- 3 I'm going to repeat what I heard, and you can tell me.
- I think what I heard is you were asking if I can
- 5 confirm that the Teva -- that the bellwether we would go
- 6 forward with if we did would be the Teva-centric overarching
- 7 conspiracy count.
- 8 And if that's the question, the answer would be yes,
- 9 that's what we would be going forward with in the bellwether.
- MS. LEVINE: Just wanted to clarify, because your Teva
- 11 overarching is not a cookie cutter of the States. And you did
- 12 not intend to broaden the bellwether?
- I just want to make sure that you're talking about
- 14 just any claims that are co-terminus with the States' AG Teva
- 15 Complaint.
- MR. BLECHMAN: Your Honor, I don't know if I should
- 17 have a lawyer sitting next to me to answer the questions,
- 18 forgive me. I don't need to be answering questions from
- 19 counsel without going through the Court. So I want to be
- 20 respectful, Your Honor. I know Ms. Levine does too. I'll
- 21 answer the questions, Your Honor, but I want to stay within the
- 22 procedures the Court prefers.
- 23 THE COURT: I'm going to let you two continue that
- 24 discussion offline --
- MR. BLECHMAN: Very well, Your Honor.

- 1 THE COURT: -- because that needs to be clarified.
- 2 It does impact on what happens here.
- 3 MR. BLECHMAN: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 4 THE COURT: But I think -- I understand exactly what's
- 5 happening here. Where are the lines? Can we draw any? Can we
- 6 draw some? And I hope we can. All right.
- 7 I'd like to ask the Masters if any of you would like
- 8 to add anything. I'm going to start with Special Master Dan
- 9 Regard.
- Where are you, Dan?
- 11 SPECIAL MASTER REGARD: Here, Your Honor.
- I only want to let Your Honor know that there is an
- 13 objection to my R&R that was filed. And that's before the
- 14 Court filed by Sandoz. And it's just a reminder.
- I have nothing else to add.
- 16 THE COURT: Thank you.
- Yes, I saw the objection. I don't know if all the
- 18 briefing is done yet.
- Okay. And Master Merenstein, is there anything you
- 20 could tell us?
- 21 SPECIAL MASTER MERENSTEIN: Good afternoon, Your
- 22 Honor.
- THE COURT: Good afternoon.
- 24 SPECIAL MASTER MERENSTEIN: Nothing much to add. Mr.
- 25 Costa had referred to one discrete dispute involving

- 1 defendants' sales and transactional data. We have a call about
- 2 that tomorrow that I will hopefully be able to resolve.
- 3 And the only other thing that I would report is that
- 4 you may recall at the last status conference you referred to me
- 5 the dispute over the DOJ's list. The defendants would like to
- 6 expand the scope of those who can put eyes on that list. I've
- 7 received letters from the parties. We have a call scheduled
- 8 about that dispute next Wednesday. Again, hopefully, we can
- 9 work that out.
- 10 That's it, Your Honor.
- 11 THE COURT: Thank you very much.
- And Special Master Marion, do you have anything else
- 13 to add?
- 14 SPECIAL MASTER MARION: Just to say that there are two
- 15 other issues that I have. One is resolved, one on the way to
- 16 resolution I hope, involving production of documents by the
- 17 States of Connecticut and Pennsylvania.
- 18 I issued an informal recommendation for the
- 19 Connecticut dispute, and the parties reached agreement on all
- 20 the issues there.
- 21 And I have still outstanding an informal report on the
- 22 defendants' motion to compel Pennsylvania to produce certain
- 23 documents. And without getting into the issues, that is still
- 24 pending, but I hope it will be resolved.
- I mentioned the matter I am handling with the

- 1 clawbacks and trying to do something creative that will shorten
- 2 some of these dates rather than lengthen them.
- 3 And finally, I think my conscience requires me to say
- 4 that Mr. Nielsen gave me a compliment about being ingenious.
- 5 And the compliment really should be to the Court because it was
- 6 your suggestion that we consider separate tracks. And we did
- 7 do that in the R&R on the bellwether.
- 8 That's all I have to say I think that's pertinent.
- 9 THE COURT: I don't know that that's ingenious either
- 10 even if I did suggest it, but it's something that I thought
- 11 would help alleviate some of the confusion.
- 12 SPECIAL MASTER MERENSTEIN: It would help.
- THE COURT: If any of you know me, I like to eliminate
- 14 confusion.
- I thank you very much. And I thank all of you for
- 16 continuing to work sometimes with some difficulty through these
- 17 very thorny issues.
- Anything else from anyone who has joined us by audio
- 19 only?
- I'll give you a moment to unmute.
- I don't hear anything.
- Mr. Blechman, do you need something else?
- MR. BLECHMAN: No, Your Honor. I was just checking --
- 24 THE COURT: Because you're front and center in my
- 25 screen, and that usually means you're making noise.

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1
             MR. BLECHMAN: Sorry about that. I was just checking
 2
    my microphone.
 3
             THE COURT: No problem.
 4
             Then if there's no objection, I'll thank you and see
 5
    you in one month.
 6
             RESPONSE: Thank you, Your Honor.
 7
             (Proceedings concluded at 3:07 p.m.)
 8
 9
10
             I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript
11
    from the record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.
12
13
14
    Ann Marie Mitchell, CRR, RDR, RMR
    Official Court Reporter
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    Date:
           July 13, 2020
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